

## **Statement of Chairman Richard Burr**

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January 10, 2017

I'd like to welcome our witnesses, Jim Clapper, Director of National Intelligence; John Brennan, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Jim Comey, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Admiral Mike Rogers, Director of the National Security Agency. Directors Clapper and Brennan, while I've said this to you before in a closed setting, this is likely your last appearance before the Committee, at least in your current roles, and I want to thank you each for your years of dedicated service.

We convene today to discuss the President's directed review on "Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections." While Russia and the Soviet Union have used Active Measures as a tool of statecraft since the 1920s, recent actions by the Russian Government represent, as you report, a notable escalation. I know that the public disclosure of these activities surprised many, and the notion that another state would attempt to interfere in our elections is troubling.

However, Russian Active Measures – as a general topic – is not new to the Members of this Committee. We have held more than ten hearings and briefings over the last two years that have focused in-whole or in-part to better understand the scale and scope of these efforts, and the intentions behind them. Each of our witnesses has appeared before in closed session

to discuss this topic and, in response – on a bipartisan and bicameral basis – this Committee and its sister committee in the other body have put forward unclassified and classified proposals to address these activities. Some work has been done, but to effectively address this challenge to the integrity of our system of government will require a whole of government approach.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on the details of the Intelligence Community Assessment. Intelligence reporting over the last few years, to include the classified and compartmented portions of this Assessment, gives me no reason to doubt the findings contained within this product. That said, we owe it to our colleagues and the American people to do an independent and bipartisan review of the report and its conclusions. I have, therefore, instructed Committee staff to carry out an assessment of the sourcing behind this report, and we will be asking each of our witnesses to provide the Committee access to the intelligence that contributed to this Assessment. I want to assure my colleagues on this Committee and in this body that we will follow the intelligence wherever it leads, and we will conduct this review in a non-partisan manner. I also want assure the witnesses before us that, as has long been our practice, the Committee will

treat the protection of these sources with the level of security and professionalism required.

I'd also like to quickly thank the men and women of the Intelligence Community for their work in completing this review. To each of our witnesses, please thank your respective staffs, as I have no doubt that this effort ruined the holiday plans of many.

While this moment in our history is critical, and the testimony before this Committee in an open setting will, I hope, help the American public understand what Russia attempted to accomplish as part of its focus on our 2016 elections. I want to make this clear: our democracy is not at risk. We can rest assured in the strength of the United States of America and have continued faith in the electoral process. We must be alert, though, to the challenges that face us and the threats posed by those who seek to undermine Western democratic values, whether through interference in our own elections or relentless propaganda and Active Measures targeting our friends and allies abroad. Our values are, indeed, under assault. The key difference between the efforts of the past and the attacks of today, however, is the tools being used to carry them out.

Gentlemen, thank you again for being here and I look forward to your testimony. I will now turn to the distinguished Vice Chairman for any remarks he may have . . .